

becomes more and more one-sided, and the consciousness of being behind the times, the left-out feeling when with people of wider outlook, together with the increasing lassitude of every year's work, reduce her finally to a condition of dulness.

The wish to carry on her work, which she truly loves, under easier conditions is indeed there, but she lacks the mental elasticity to struggle against circumstances, especially when to do so might risk her livelihood. These are the reasons why it is so seldom that a voice is raised from the ranks of nursing sisters. From my long service as head of a nursing staff I can assert that many distressing complaints reach my ears, and every year the conviction grows stronger that the old system must not be allowed to continue.

The fear will be expressed on many sides that if a nurse is able to cultivate outside interests her work will deteriorate. I believe, on the contrary, that her cheerful devotion to her work is often lost or changed to a spiritless routine, as a result of the excessive drains now made upon her strength. Health and physical and mental freshness are due to our work. Everyone knows the tonic influence of a cheerful, vigorous, and sympathetic personality upon the sick. It is being acknowledged in all branches of labor that rest and recreation are necessary if one will bring fresh energy to one's work. Why may not this principle be carried into nursing?

Many who wish to study nursing are by its hardships compelled to decide against it, and to vary the theme at the beginning of my paper, I can say that many more educated women would find in it a congenial occupation if a reformation in the system of work were possible. That this reformation must come slowly I well know. In Germany the best intentions must often wait for the necessary financial means. But it is a good sign when the general public begins to feel interest in the nurse's work and life. When that happens liberal minds will advocate more humane conditions and the nurse's labors will be mitigated. I hope that the Hamburg Association, which, though young, has already so much to be proud of, may become more and more emancipated.

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## LETTERS

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### LETTER FROM ITALY

(Continued from page 600)

OSPEDALE CLINICO, NAPLES.

. . . I will not close without stating that during the year we have had about twelve or thirteen calls for nurses, both for private and hospital work. Of course, the pupils were not allowed to go, being still at the commencement of their training.

The only nursing they have attempted outside the hospital has been at the High School, of which the Princess is president, or in the homes of their own relations. In every case, except one which happened to be a case of measles, they have been obliged to attend the hospital as usual. The cases nursed were as follows: a typhoid case, of which my pupil took the night duty; a case of blood-poisoning from tainted fish; endometritis with profuse hemorrhage; malignant tumor of the thoracic cavity; uræmia (night duty); meningitis (night duty); the epidemic of measles above mentioned, in which my little pupil was isolated

for five weeks. In all these cases I was obliged to supervise the work of my pupils, which did not tend to lighten my labors; but I must assume that the work gave satisfaction, since in almost every case either the doctor or the family have taken the trouble to acknowledge the work done.

To illustrate further the difference between social customs in Italy and America and the influence which they exert on social life, I will mention that during the year I have had to deal with two flirtations between nurses and doctors. Now this may seem of no importance to Americans, but in our case the incidents nearly wrecked our fragile harque. . . . .

It is significant of the opinion in which flirtations are held, when not carried on under the direct ægis of the parents, that the director, when he heard of them, behaved as though the affairs had brought dishonor on the whole institution. It was with the very greatest difficulty that I persuaded him not to discharge the whole staff of the assistant doctors, twelve in number, for the offence committed by two only. My pupils being very young, I honestly believe them not to have been so much in the wrong as the doctors who had dared to admire them from afar; but I could only save them by keeping them out of the way for days after, and as it is, they must take lowest rank for months to come.

You will have realized by now that since the feasibility of a lady-nurse remaining unchaperoned in the wards is denied to us in the first place, there are greater difficulties in the way of conducting the work of the hospital with trained nurses of the educated class than at first appear. I confess that I do not yet see my way to it. In private houses, where, unless they were married women to begin with, they would nurse women only, there is more probability of success, but here too I anticipate difficulties.

To overcome these the Princess is organizing a system by means of which the nurse will be watched over and only permitted to accept cases after the society had explored the ground. A few love-affairs of the kind mentioned above, though innocent enough in Anglo-Saxon countries, would in Italy ruin a serious undertaking such as ours is to its very foundation. "*Si Romæ fueris, Romano vivito more.*"

GRACE BAXTER

(Graduate of the Johns Hopkins Hospital).

WE are glad to have the following explanation, and hope to give later some of the Danish law relating to Sick Funds:

"DANSK KVINDERAAD, KOBENHAVN, May, 1901

"DEAR EDITOR: In reading the April number of your splendid *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* I see that you take some exception to the paragraph in the constitution of the Danish Nurses' Association as to the dishanding of the association.

"I should like to draw your attention to the fact that it is quite a usual thing in the constitution of a Danish association, as you will see from the 'Law on recognized sick-clubs' of April 12, 1892,\* giving regulations for the support which the Danish State tends to every sick-club whose members have not great means. Section 25 of this law contains the following regulations:

\* A copy of which I send by book-post.

" 'The by-laws of a recognized sick-club shall be attached to every member's booklet, and they shall contain the following points: name, etc., general meeting, etc., accountants, etc., the use to be made of the surplus, especially at the disbanding of the sick-club,' etc., etc.

" I should like to give my name as the 'thoughtful friend' who sent you the constitution in questions, but being very busy at that moment, I was not 'thoughtful' enough as to write a letter with it.

" I am very sorry that I shall not come to your Buffalo Congress, but I shall be very happy to read of the proceedings.

" Believe me cordially and admiringly yours,

" CHARLOTTE NORRIE,

" Councillor International Council of Nurses."

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#### OUR FOREIGN EXCHANGES

THE Foreign Department is happy in its exchanges with the different foreign nursing journals. The *League News* of the St. Bartholomew's League of Nurses comes twice a year, looking indeed like our own cousin in its green and black, and is a complete model of all that an *alumnæ* journal should be. We commend it to one or two of our organizations which, we hear, are thinking of starting their own school journals. The two Holland journals, *Nosokomos* and *Maandblad*, come monthly, and both seem interested in keeping their readers posted as to English and American nursing affairs.

The English *Nursing Notes* also comes monthly, and as this magazine represents officially six large associations and, indirectly, a numerous body of English nurses, it is greatly to be valued for the information to be gained from it as to the many activities and undertakings of its members.

The *Nursing Record* comes weekly, and is quite widely known in this country. It is a delightful companion, and presses home the conviction that a weekly journal has an advantage over a monthly in that it is able to give a full and uncut panorama of passing events.

We hope to include the *Nurses' Journal*, the organ of the Royal British Nurses' Association, in our list, and then we shall have all the nursing periodicals of Great Britain.

